



COMDTPUB 16700.4  
NVIC 3-00  
May 11, 2000

## NAVIGATION AND VESSEL INSPECTION CIRCULAR NO.

Subj: **MANNING AND TRAINING GUIDANCE FOR FAST RESCUE BOATS ON UNITED STATES VESSELS**

1. **PURPOSE.** This Circular publishes the Coast Guard's policy for the manning of vessels equipped with fast rescue boats and for the training of mariners assigned to such craft. It defines fast rescue boats and identifies the ships required to carry them under the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, and its Protocol of 1978, as amended (SOLAS 74/78). It also summarizes the knowledge and skills that a mariner must demonstrate to obtain the endorsement for fast rescue boats on the certificates issued under the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, as amended.
2. **ACTION.** Officers in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMIs), should use this Circular when evaluating an applicant requesting a certificate under STCW 1995 with the endorsement for fast rescue boats. They should also use it as guidance when determining the manning on a vessel with a mandatory or voluntary installation of a fast rescue boat. They should also bring this circular to the attention of the appropriate people in the maritime industry within their zones.
3. **DIRECTIVES AFFECTED.** None.
4. **BACKGROUND.**
  - a. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) established the requirements and guidelines for fast rescue boats within the International Life-Saving Appliance Code (LSA) and Assembly resolution A.656 (16). Roll-on/roll-off (ro-ro) passenger ships must carry such boats under SOLAS 74/78, chapter III, regulation 26.

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- b. Operating fast rescue boats takes special skills and training. The guidance on these skills and training appears in Assembly resolution A.771 (18), adopted November 4, 1993, which provides specific performance standards for the crew of these craft. The guidance in this resolution now appears in Table A-VI/2-2 of the STCW Code, as part of the 1995 STCW Amendments, which came into force on February 1, 1997.

### 5. DEFINITIONS.

- a. Fast rescue boat – A rescue boat holding approval under Coast Guard approval series 160.156 (SOLAS Rescue Boat) and designated “Fast Rescue Boat” on the approval certificate. Such boats meet the guidelines found in the IMO LSA Code and IMO Assembly resolution A.689 (17) as amended by resolution MSC.81 (70) on December 11, 1998. These boats must be capable of, among other things, operating for at least 4 hours at a speed of at least 20 knots in calm water with a crew of 3 persons and a speed of at least 8 knots with a full complement of persons and equipment. Their construction can be rigid, inflated or rigid/inflated.
- b. Ro-ro passenger vessel – A passenger ship with ro-ro cargo spaces or special-category spaces as defined in SOLAS chapter III, regulation 3.

### 6. DISCUSSION.

#### a. Manning Requirements

- (1) A ro-ro passenger ship on an international voyage operating seaward of the boundary line (as defined by Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations (46 CFR), part 7) must, under SOLAS 74/78, chapter III, regulation 26 (as amended in 1996), carry at least one fast rescue boat. No other ships are required to be equipped with fast rescue craft.
- (2) Regulation 26 requires that each fast rescue boat installed on a ro-ro passenger ship must have at least two crews trained in its operation.
- (3) Owners and operators with fast rescue boats installed on their vessels (whether voluntarily or mandatorily) should consider the guidance in this circular and have crewmembers on board who both are trained and assessed as required by STCW Code, section A-VI/2, paragraphs 5 through 8, Table A-VI/2-2, and are certificated in accordance with 46 CFR 12.10-9. Table A-VI/2-2 is replicated in enclosure (1).
- (4) OCMI's should determine the appropriate number of trained and certificated lifeboatmen for ships on domestic voyages, under their authority in 46 CFR 15.801. When they determine the number of lifeboatmen, under the provisions in 46 CFR 199.100, they should also determine the number of persons trained in operating fast rescue boats, if such boats are installed. The training for these lifeboatmen should be consistent with paragraph 6.b.

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- (a) In determining the appropriate number of personnel certificated for fast rescue boats, a review of STCW Code Table A-VI/2-2 was conducted. That review suggests that based upon the required competence, an individual certificated for fast rescue boats is expected to conduct in-water recoveries. It is not reasonable to expect a fast rescue boat to be left unmanned or manned by personnel not certificated in its operation during these in-water recoveries
- (b) Considering the review discussed in paragraph 6.a.(4)(a), a fast rescue boat when in operation should be manned by a minimum of two (2) persons certificated in its operation.
- (c) The OCMI should document the personnel requirements for vessels with fast rescue boats installed within the Route Permitted and Conditions of Operation section of the Certificate of Inspection. The endorsement should read:

*“The Master shall ensure that 4 persons on board the vessel are assigned and qualified to operate each installed fast rescue boat. The Master shall ensure that the fast rescue boat is operated with at least 2 persons qualified in its operation.”*

### b. Training Requirements

- (1) Any lifeboatman designated to operate fast rescue boats must, under 46 CFR 12.10-9, hold a merchant mariner’s document endorsed for proficiency in them. Any candidate for this endorsement must also meet the provisions of STCW as specified in 46 CFR 12.10-9.
- (2) STCW regulation VI/2, paragraph 2, and section A-VI/2, paragraphs 5 through 8 of the STCW Code (including Table A-VI/2-2), specify the requirements for proficiency of those mariners operating fast rescue boats. STCW regulation VI/2, paragraph 2, requires each candidate for an endorsement to operate a fast rescue boat also to hold certification of proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats. The requirements for proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats appear in STCW regulation VI/2, paragraph 1, and section A-VI/2, paragraphs 1 through 4, of the STCW Code (including Table A-VI/2-1).
- (3) At present, completion of a course approved by the Coast Guard is the only available way of qualifying for a certificate endorsed for fast rescue boats. In January 2000, the IMO Subcommittee on Standards of Training and Watchkeeping validated a model course entitled Proficiency in Fast Rescue Boats. This model course provides guidance for the development of training programs.
  - (a) The model course on “Proficiency in Fast Rescue Boats” is a syllabus acceptable to the Coast Guard for development of a training program, under 46 CFR 12.03.

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Requests for deviations from features of the model course, such as a shortening of the course or as an adjustment of a timetable based on access to fast rescue boats or comparable factors, should go to the National Maritime Center (NMC) for case-by-case evaluation and approval. Under 46 CFR 12.03-1(a)(10), a Quality Standards System (QSS) must be used to ensure a training program meets its objectives, unless the training program is offered by a maritime academy.

1. When the Coast Guard performs the QSS, the NMC will oversee the program according to 46 CFR 12.03-1(a).
  2. When the Coast Guard does not perform the QSS, the NMC may, under the guidance within Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC) 7-97, monitor or observe the QSS or the training course, or both, for compliance with the model course. When observations indicate that the course may not conform to the model course, the NMC will oversee the program according to 46 CFR 12.03-1(c).
- (b) STCW section A-VI/2 and 46 CFR 12.10-9 require the conducting and documenting of individual assessments of proficiency by someone qualified as a designated examiner. NVIC 6-97 provides guidance on designated examiners.
- (4) The designated examiner should use a standard set of performance measures when evaluating individual proficiency in operating fast rescue boats, to ensure consistent and thorough assessments. Designated examiners may use national performance measures, when developed, or may develop their own guidelines subject to approval by NMC.
- c. Direct any questions about this NVIC to the NMC at telephone number (202) 493-1000. This NVIC will not be Printed it will only be available on the World Wide Web.



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Encl: (1) STCW Code Table A-VI/2-2

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**STCW Code Table A-VI/2-2**

Specification of the minimum standard of competence in fast rescue boats

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Competence	Knowledge, understanding and Proficiency	Methods for demonstrating competence	Criteria for evaluating competence
Take charge of a fast rescue boat during and after launch	<p>Construction and outfit of fast rescue boats and individual items of their equipment</p> <p>Particular characteristics and facilities of fast rescue boats</p> <p>Safety precaution during launch and recovery of a fast rescue boat</p> <p>Procedures for righting a capsized fast rescue boat</p> <p>How to handle a fast rescue boat in prevailing and adverse weather and sea conditions</p> <p>Navigational and safety equipment available in a fast rescue boat</p> <p>Search patterns and environmental factors affecting their execution</p> <p>Assessment of the readiness of fast rescue boats and related equipment for immediate use</p> <p>Knowledge of the maintenance, emergency repairs, normal inflation and deflation of buoyancy compartments of inflated fast rescue boats</p>	<p>Assessment of evidence obtained from practical demonstration of ability to:</p> <p>.1 control safe launching and recovery of a fast rescue boat</p> <p>.2 right a capsized fast rescue boat</p> <p>.3 handle a fast rescue boat in prevailing weather and sea conditions</p> <p>.4 swim in special equipment</p> <p>.5 use communication and signaling equipment between the fast rescue boat and a helicopter and a ship</p> <p>.6 use the emergency equipment carried</p> <p>.7 recover a casualty from the water and transfer a casualty to a rescue helicopter or to a ship or to a place of safety</p> <p>.8 carry out search patterns, taking account of environmental factors</p>	Preparation, boarding, launching and operation of fast rescue boats is within equipment limitations
Operate a fast rescue boat engine	Methods of starting and operating a fast rescue boat engine and its accessories	Assessment of evidence obtained from practical demonstration of ability to start and operate a fast rescue boat engine	Engine is started and operated as required for maneuvering